

City council, staff mindful of redevelopment of downtown, Campus Corner

Red Ink and Pink Floyd

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter to the Editor: Downtown I have followed the recent discussions about McNellie's with interest. Some seem to believe that McNellie's demise is the result of the University North Park (UNP) development; some seem to think that the Council has shown no concern for the downtown area of our community. Having served on Council now for nearly six years I do not agree with either of those perceptions.

While the University North Park has shown substantial growth since its inception in 2006, the majority of new businesses in Norman have developed outside the UNP. The UNP area undoubtedly grew at a faster rate because of public support of the infrastructure, in the form of a TIF. However, it is certainly not the only area to benefit from public interest and support in our community. Likewise, the campus corner area was the beneficiary of a small TIF several years ago.

Main Street has benefitted from over \$11 million in improved infrastructure and streetscaping. The council and citizens spent nearly two years with a consultant studying the area between the campus corner and downtown and coming up with a masterplan for redevelopment. The whole area was rezoned, a council action, to encourage mixed use redevelopment and improve walkability. Shortly thereafter, I oversaw the plan for and approval of a \$44 million TIF to improve the infrastructure in that area. New restaurants and businesses continue to open on Main Street and many seem to be doing very well. I drive Main almost every day and continue see more and more activity as the months go by. A year ago, after considerable time and effort on the part of the staff, a quiet zone for the trains was instituted throughout Norman benefitting downtown Norman, and a number of rail crossings have been improved as well.

NORMAN FORWARD which passed in 2015 is funding the new central library and will provide matching funds to extend James Garner from Flood and Robinson to Eufaula. The council, city staff, and business leaders have been involved in an ongoing parking study of needs and solutions for over three years. The City and

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for infrastructure in the core area of Norman including downtown.

The City Council, past and present, and our staff have been very mindful of the importance of the redevelopment of the downtown/campus corner area and I have given just a few examples of recent actions. We all treasure our Downtown and Campus Corner area and with significant public support and funding they continue to grow and improve! Lynne Miller
Norman Mayor

Most throwbacks like myself who read printed news, such as the Transcript, also connect to the beyond-world via digital feeds. Regardless of our truth sources, it's a fact that in the last two years our national debt has risen by 10% to \$22 trillion. Although I had anticipated an actual reduction following the 2016 elections, let us be grateful for the stewardship of our fiscal conservatives for keeping this down. It is in the context of rising debt that I have been trying to understand the imminent national security threat at our border and the need for a "big beautiful wall." It's unfortunate that "The Wall" has become an intractable political impasse.

Although it's only 0.125% of the federal budget, it still represents more debt. I am not inherently opposed to a wall, but I am uncomfortable paying for something that is probably expensive and more less effective than blended options for border security. One possible solution to our self-inflicted crisis of governmental grid lock would be to add a check box on our tax returns and let the taxpayers pay what they want. Big League - Go Fund Me. Shucks, even corporations could participate. Yes, first the IRS needs to re-open, but considering roughly 239,000,000 persons file federal tax returns, we only need an average of twenty bucks per return to achieve full funding. Come on we can do it together! All in all, it's just another brick in the wall. Andrew Cullen Norman

LOCAL

County have been in conversations about a parking authority which could provide additional parking in the campus and downtown area. The county already has plans for a parking garage on Comanche.

The upcoming Transportation and Stormwater bond issues being discussed for an April vote include millions of dollars in funding