

(6/28/09): Berding & Qualls Pushed Bengals Stadium, Now Pushing Streetcar

The Cincinnati NAACP remains concerned that the same elected officials who pushed the Bengals stadium deal and stood with Bedinghaus now push a streetcar. Berding and Mayor Roxanne Qualls promised Hamilton County voters that sales tax revenue would support the stadium deal. Berding, Qualls and County Commissioner Bob Bedinghaus projections were wrong and now Hamilton County Commissioner Pepper, Portune, and Hartman are having a major problem balancing the current county budget.

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Cincinnati NAACP

The Cincinnati NAACP remains concerned that the same elected officials who pushed the Bengals stadium deal and stood with Bedinghaus now push a streetcar. Berding and Mayor Roxanne Qualls promised Hamilton County voters that sales tax revenue would support the stadium deal. Berding, Qualls and County Commissioner Bob Bedinghaus projections were wrong and now Hamilton County Commissioner Pepper, Portune, and Hartman are having a major problem balancing the current county budget. "I was shocked to see Berding on Channel 5 this morning attacking council on financial projections. You would think Berding would just crawl in a hole based on his own financial failure with the Bengal Stadium" Smitherman says. The quotes below from 1996 and 1999 need no introduction:

The Cincinnati Post Saturday, January 27, 1996

Voinovich will appear at a rally at a downtown hotel, and he will be joined by Cincinnati Mayor Roxanne Qualls and Bedinghaus. Jeff Berding, chairman of the pro-tax campaign, said Friday that Voinovich's appearance underlines the tax issue's importance.

"The governor understands that 25 years from now, people will look back at this and say that the stadium sales tax issue defined the future of Greater Cincinnati," Berding said. If Hamilton County voters approve the measure, the increase - from 5.5 to 6 cents on the dollar - would generate an estimated \$50 million annually.

The Cincinnati Post Thursday, September 23, 1999

Bengals' Director of Community Affairs Jeff Berding said it is highly unlikely the county will have to pay a significant sum, if anything, because of its ticket-sales pledge.

"I think everyone in the program is extraordinarily confident we will exceed the 50,000 for each and every one of the games," Berding said.

Cincinnati Post Thursday, October 12, 2000

"This is all about broken promises and mortgaging the county's future," said Portune. "That tax was supposed to be retired early, in less than 20 years, and we're approaching 40 years. It appears the county is moving in the direction of a tax that will go on forever."

The Cincinnati NAACP understands that Bedinghaus and Berding happen to now work for the Bengals full-time. "Hamilton County got stuck with a bad deal while Berding and Bedinghaus got a job" Smitherman says. The same team with some new additions want Cincinnati to support a streetcar in downtown for \$200 million based on projections of 4600 people per day ridership paying .50 cents. The operating of the streetcar would cost taxpayers 3.5 million per year. Smitherman says, "City Council and the Mayor are about to layoff workers and they still want to spend money on a "choo-choo" train downtown based on more bad projection. What if 2,000 people ride the choo-choo train and the shortfall is 7 million per year? I guess Berding will still be working for the Bengals while current city workers are collecting unemployment checks." The Cincinnati NAACP remains concerned that Berding, Bortz and Qualls all voted to cut benefits for retirees while pushing this downtown 200 million dollar choo choo train. All three quotes from the Newspapers above were taken from a website called the Cincinnati Beacon.