

Betsy and I were very involved in the 2010 comprehensive plan. In 2010 The country was starting to recover from the great recession. A large part of the comprehensive plan was discussion about how the town could become more financially sustainable.

I believe that part of the reason my relationship with the town has been somewhat difficult at times is because I have been fairly outspoken about our park system.

I moved to Lyons from Boulder in 1998. When I came to town the locals would say that we have great parks but they're almost impossible to get into on weekends because we have so many out-of-town users.

At the time the town collected 3% sales tax. 1% of the 3% or 1/3 went to maintain the parks. It was discussed that if we could find a way to make the parks pay their own way then this money could be used for other town needs. Without financial resources this goal was very challenging

In 2013 when the flood hit, the town applied for and received grants of several million dollars. This seemed like the perfect opportunity to come up with a plan to put amenities in our parks that would cover the expense of maintaining them.

The public involvement in the planning process seem to be much more about the small decisions and not much about what the public thought should be done to make these parks financially sustainable.

I spoke up publicly about this saying that I thought there should be more effort put into determining what amenities would pay their own way and not need to be subsidized. I confronted the Parks and Rec Director at a public meeting in Rogers Hall and he made it clear the meeting was about swings and teeter totter's and not about the cash flow. But he did assure me the town was on top of this and that they were certain they had a plan that would reach that goal. I had serious doubts.

It was about this time that the town was making an effort to get as many people as possible in the floodplain to sell to the 404 program. It was becoming very clear to me that they very much wanted the Riverbend property to become part of the park system. We had plans for the property and did not want to sell.

I had a conversation with town engineer Blankenship and he confirmed that there were those on staff and maybe the board that would like to see the town own the Riverbend property and become part of the parks. He was in agreement with me that the property could much better serve the town in the private sector.

Riverbend was not the only property that the town staff had their eye on. There were also several properties in the confluence area that the town also wanted control of. Many of these home owners very much wanted to stay in their homes in that location.

During this time the town made it more and more difficult for us to change our zoning and also made it very difficult for many homeowners in the confluence to get permits to rebuild their homes.

I definitely felt at this time that the staff and some board members felt I was not a team player and therefore maybe should be punished for not selling out to the 404 program. Many of the actions that have taken place between ourselves and the town since then sure seem like punishment. I'm not sure what else could explain it.

I will say that we have wonderful parks, and other than on weekends in the summer I'm sure are enjoyed by a lot of locals. But during these weekends in the summer the parks tie up a lot of parking spaces which are quite valuable and they take a lot of sales tax revenue which could be spent on locals. The few times I've walked through the parks on weekends in the summer I see very few locals. Maybe we're subsidizing the wrong people.