

Tours for the clairvoyant (Editorial below)

Dear Editor,

It was with distress I read your scathing editorial regarding the "Trinity Tour" on January 5th. It would have been instructive to investigate how this "community tour" was created and conducted. Yes, Trinity did blunder when they tried to expand a tour requested by an individual to a "community tour."

Trinity responded to a request by Ayer selectman James Fay to visit Trinity developments in Boston. He negotiated the date and asked me to accompany him as we had been talking at the very moment about Trinity and the Vicksburg proposal. James Fay then informed others in Ayer, extending an invitation to them to accompany him. I spread the word on Devens that I was going to accompany Selectman Fay. I added that this tour was requested and organized by Jim Fay and I did not feel that this was an originated Trinity "community" tour. Trinity did let it be know that other interested residents could be accommodated on the day Jim Fay selected to visit. This resulted in notification to a broader audience.

Trinity guilt is not continued opaque behavior; their guilt is over zealousness and poor planning in trying to broaden understanding . As the "tour requested by Jim Fay" morphed into a broader tour, Trinity should have been far more sensitivity to deadlines and attentive to the possibility their actions would be flipped into insensitivity and manipulation. The fact that this visit organically grew from a request by a specific individual only reinforced my understanding that Trinity would respond to any request to visit Trinity sites by any group or individual.

To characterize Trinity actions as continued opaque behavior in conducting this tour is light years from the truth. Truth is, they were very short sighted in their eagerness to try to open this tour to others on short notice; nothing more.

I would suggest you, Nashoba Publications contact Trinity's Abby Goldenfard and plan a Nashoba Publication sponsored tour of these Trinity project. I am certain that they will be more than gracious and accommodating. If fact, I feel they will openly and eagerly embrace such a request.

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Tours for the clairvoyant

Nashoba Publishing

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Trinity Financial continues in its bid to win the local vote to rezone Vicksburg Square on Devens into a 246-unit low- and very low- income apartment complex.

Last week, the Boston-based developer employed its new Boston-based public relations agency to send out press releases to local media outlets to promote a public tour of Trinity's Boston developments.

Problem was -- these newspapers were given the press release on Tuesday for a Thursday tour when we don't publish until Friday. Kind of defeats the purpose of holding a "community" tour. Along with the short notice, interested attendees had to make their own way to Boston for the 10 a.m. two-hour tour.

The net effect was a tour attended by three community members -- Ayer Selectman Jim Fay, Devens Committee member Phil Crosby and a woman from Ayer, Ellen Neelands, an education consultant.

When asked for comment about the short notice, a bevy of selectmen said they had been informed of the tour well in advance of the Tuesday press release.

No so for the "community," however.

A press release also announced that Trinity Financial has launched a website. Though they've not been given tri-town approval for their project, the website indicates intent to occupy Vicksburg Square. The website www.VicksburgSquare.com offers select news reports on the project's development through the public process and some history of Vicksburg Square.

And, you can sign up to send letters to the editor.

(Send them to us, too, as editor@nashobapub.com or to Nashoba Publishing, P.O. Box 362, Ayer, MA 01432 -- regardless of your viewpoint.)

So far, Trinity is trucking right along:

PR spin from Boston, an 11th hour tour? Check.

A PR event staged in Harvard with captive seniors used as props without inviting the press to actually report firsthand? Check.

Countless coconut doughnuts consumed and coffee klatches convened behind-the-scenes for those who yearn to meet directly with Trinity Financial President Jim Keefe? Check.

Announce the opening of a campaign headquarters, but refuse to open or staff it during regular business hours? Check.

Get out-of-town media outlets to publish content in favor of the project? Check. (Fact

check: The buildings are not to be "knocked down," and historic use was for far more than "barracks.")

Ayer's Finance Committee chairman said last Wednesday that he feels the locals who'll make the decision are being painted by the out-of-town media as "hicks," "idiots" and "dolts."

We agree. But don't expect the PR spin to stop now.

So far, we give Trinity perfect scores on the transparency scale -- perfectly opaque ... or totally transparent for the clairvoyant. How you label it depends on your spin.

There remain serious questions needing answers. Opposition to this project is not an anti-affordable housing response.

It's concern for the 246 families that would not be plopped into an urban setting like Lowell or Boston with public transportation and a myriad of services, but in a nontown with no public transportation and few services.

And it's concern for the cost of caring for these people, an expense estimated to far exceed the revenue their taxes will bring.

Talk of adding significant population to Devens, furthering its quest for township, is exciting. But answer the questions being posed by the people who actually live here, work out the issues, actually plan for a thriving and successful project, and then ask for their votes.

Don't try to distract them with shiny rhetoric. They won't fall for it.

Read more: http://www.nashobapublishing.com/editorials/ci_19735327#ixzz1jS5zM3bX