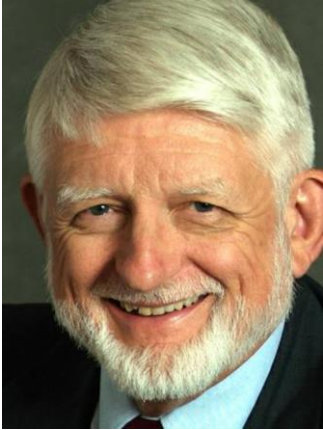


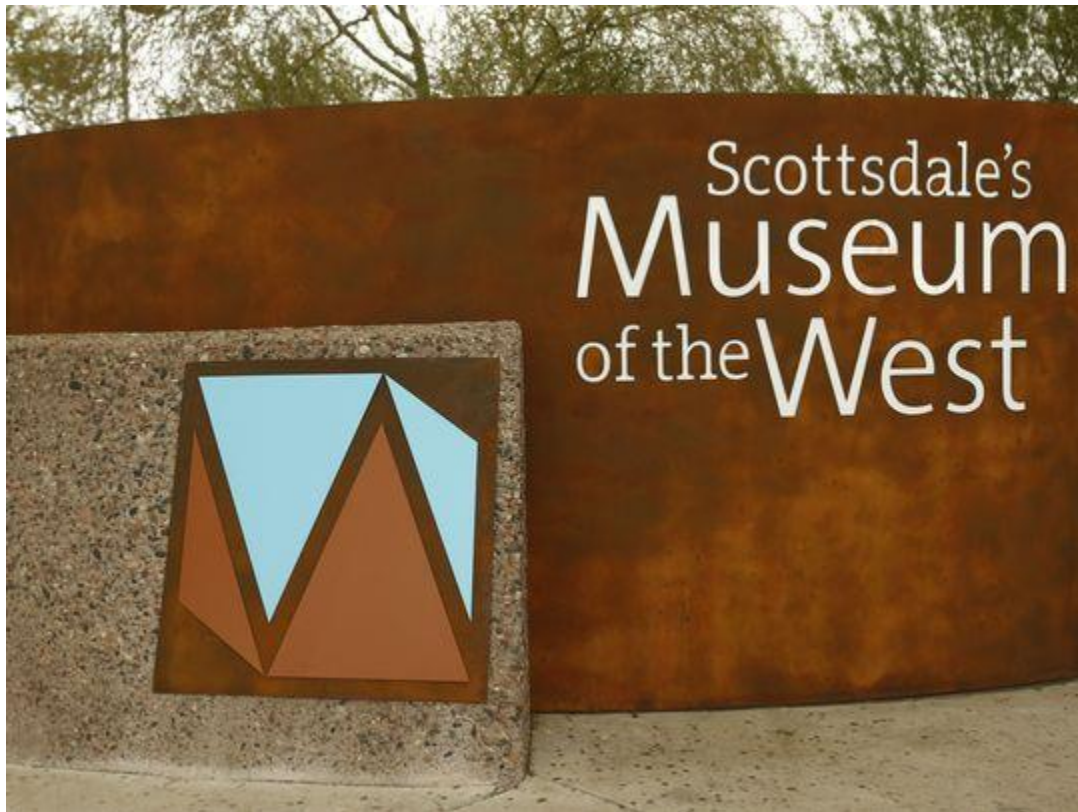
Littlefield: Unapologetic 'no' on bad projects for Scottsdale

Bob Littlefield, AZCentral, May 12, 2016



One of the few things about this city election campaign that makes me laugh is the misinformation put out by my opponent and his allies claiming I voted "no" on everything during my 12-plus years on the Scottsdale City Council.

The verifiable truth is as a councilman I voted "yes" for expanding the Tony Nelssen Equestrian Center, building the Granite Reef Senior Center and Museum of the West, protecting Papago Park and acquiring the land for Camelback Park. I also voted 100 percent for completing the McDowell-Sonoran Preserve and for building trailheads to promote public access to the preserve, not to mention my support for many other lesser-known projects.



Scottsdale's newest museum, the Museum of the West, has brought visitors back to Marshall Way, an area of Old Town that has experienced storefront vacancies in recent years. (Photo: Rob Schumacher/The Republic)

Count me as a "yes" on good projects

When projects that are good for Scottsdale come along, I am happy to support them. But I make no apology for opposing the many bad projects which came before the City Council during my tenure. In fact, I believe that is exactly what Scottsdale residents expect their council members to do.

In addition to fighting to protect Scottsdale's special character and high quality of life, the other hallmark of my tenure on the City Council was fighting against wasteful spending and special-interest handouts. Unfortunately, the incumbent mayor and his allies are doing just the opposite. While they claim they run an efficient and austere city government, the facts prove otherwise.

Six financial concerns

- Before he retired as city treasurer, now Vice-Mayor David Smith publicly stated the City Council was balancing the operating budget not by cutting expenses, but by cutting contributions to the capital budget. For many years, the city's operating budget included as much as \$47 million per year to cover these capital costs. But for the last eight years, the mayor and his allies on the City Council have balanced their ever-growing budget by not funding the Capital Improvement Fund — they have been putting in only the bare legal minimum requirement of about \$4 million per year. Unsurprisingly that cupboard is now bare, which is why City Hall has asked Scottsdale voters twice in the last three years to increase property taxes to fund infrastructure maintenance which should be funded from general fund revenues.
- Scottsdale residents pay the second highest general fund cost per resident of any city in the Valley — only Tempe residents pay more.
- Scottsdale has more employees per resident than any other city in the Valley. Interestingly, staffing for public safety (which should be the number one priority of municipal government) isn't the issue; those numbers are right in the middle of the pack. Where Scottsdale is overstaffed is with executives, 155 of whom make six-figure salaries.
- The mayor and his allies often tout the bar district as an "economic driver." Actually, the bar district *costs* Scottsdale residents money. According to a study done by then-City Treasurer Smith, the bar district contributes less than \$400,000 in annual revenues to the city but costs \$1.2 million annually just to police the streets. And that doesn't even count the costs for maintenance (street cleaning, etc.) or code enforcement.
- In 2014, the mayor and his allies on the City Council voted to give golf pro Phil Mickelson about \$2 million dollars in taxpayer gifts in the form of a new clubhouse and other improvements to the city-owned McDowell Mountain Golf Course — improvements his lease required him to fund.
- For 10 years, the city has been sitting on 80 acres of prime land at 94th and Bell. Every year Scottsdale taxpayers shell out roughly \$3 million in debt service to keep that raw land. It's time to sell it and use the proceeds to fund some of our truly worthy and needed capital projects.

Time for new leadership

There are even more Scottsdale city budget outrages than I have room to mention in this column, but the bottom line is clear: Scottsdale needs new leadership.

During my 12-plus years on the City Council I proved myself a tireless advocate for Scottsdale residents. Help me protect Scottsdale's neighborhoods and fight wasteful spending of your taxpayer dollars by supporting my campaign for mayor.

Bob Littlefield is a former three-term Scottsdale City Councilman and is running for Scottsdale Mayor. He can be reached by email at bob@boblittlefield.com, and his website is www.boblittlefield.com.